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REPORT

CD NO.

50X1-HUM

COUNTRY Albania
 SUBJECT Economic - Mining
 HOW PUBLISHED Daily newspaper
 WHERE PUBLISHED Tirana
 DATE PUBLISHED 20 Nov 1949
 LANGUAGE Albanian

DATE OF INFORMATION 1949

DATE DIST. 14 Mar 1950

NO. OF PAGES 3

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

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SOURCE Bashkini, No 1530, 1949.

ALBANIAN MINING SHOWS COMPLETE RECOVERY

About the time of the liberation, Albanian mineral resources were nationalized: the oil fields of Kucove and Patos on 17 and 18 October 1944; the bitumen deposits of Selenice, the copper mines of Rubik, and the Kromet, Priske, and Memaliaj mines at the time of the liberation; and Krrabe and Mborje-Drenove in December 1945.

In January 1945, the repaired Diesel electric power plant at Kucove, Distillery No 1, and some of the oil wells were back in service, and later Distillery No 2 was completed. In 1946, all the stations of the Kucove-Vlone pipeline were in service, and exports of petroleum could be made. Large storage depots and pumps were built in Vlone, and machine works, repair shops for machinery and tractors, and fuel depots were rebuilt. Industrial and office buildings and housing were rebuilt and 40 new apartments for workers' families were erected. New installations for the petroleum refinery and for the production of lubricants, bitumen, greases, and valvolin were built at Kucove for the first time.

At Patos, where all the installations had been destroyed, production was resumed on 1 May 1947. Fifty industrial, office, and residential buildings, a power plant, petroleum pumping stations, workshops, etc. were built. The high-tension transmission line between Patos and Kucove was put into service. The ruined towers were restored, and work began on new wells.

The bitumen mines at Selenice were back in production in 1945 and the Rubik copper mines in 1946. In April 1945, the reconstruction of the chrome mines in the Pogradec area, at Memelisht, and later in Katiel and elsewhere, began. In 1948, the first chrome mine at Bulshize (Klos) came into production, and many other chrome mines were put into service there this year 1949. Coal pits also were reconstructed. Production has begun at the Memaliaj Tepelene mine, where prospecting was in progress before the war.

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At the Rubik copper mines, all the pits have been equipped with extracting machinery, and a new foundry has been built. Ropeways have been installed in the chrome mines of Bulqize and Katiel, and in the coal mines of Krrabe, Mborje-Drenove, and Memaliaj.

Mines have received much new machinery. The Kucove and Patos oil fields have been equipped with tractors, cleaners, motors, etc. The bitumen mines of Selenice have been equipped with new boilers for the production of cleaned bitumen. Motor-drive compressors, hammers, pneumatic drills, etc have been installed in the copper, chrome, and coal mines. Danger from gas has been eliminated at Rubik, and in Krrabe, where the galleries have been improved, smoke no longer threatens the workers' health.

Investment in the mining industry has increased from 23 million lek in 1945 to 63 million in 1946, 136,300,000 in 1947, 195,900,000 in 1948, and 455,800,000 in 1949. Mine production was 52.86 percent of the 1938 figure in 1945, 121.04 percent in 1946, 125.19 percent in 1947, 220.08 percent in 1948, and 342.13 percent in 1949.

Crude petroleum production exceeded the 1938 figure by 33.38 percent in 1947, 59.69 percent in 1948, and 98 percent in 1949.

Chrome ore production exceeded the 1938 figure by 49.74 percent in 1948 and 328.57 percent in 1949. Cleaned bitumen production exceeded the 1938 figure by 42.59 percent in 1948 and 48.2 percent in 1949.

In comparison with 1946, the first postwar year in which any was produced, blister copper production was 446.1 percent greater in 1947, 557.82 percent greater in 1948, and 1,095.6 percent greater in 1949.

Coal production was 33.21 percent above the 1938 figure in 1945, 339.53 percent above in 1946, 185.55 percent above in 1947, 473.97 percent above in 1948, and 1,072 percent above in 1949.

Over-all mine production, in value, was 21.04 percent greater than the 1938 total in 1946, 25.19 percent greater in 1947, 120.08 percent greater in 1948, and 242.13 percent greater in 1949.

Except for a certain amount of crude petroleum and bitumen, and all the coal, which are retained for domestic consumption, all products of Albanian mines (crude petroleum, cleaned bitumen, chrome ore, and blister copper) are exported, thus providing foreign exchange to pay for a considerable proportion of the imports required by the Albanian economy.

The Two-Year Plan for 1949 and 1950 calls for a total investment in the mining industry of 836 million lek, or 20.17 percent of all national investments for the 2-year period. This investment will consist mainly of aid from the USSR, and will be granted primarily to the petroleum industry for opening new wells and for securing new reserves in accordance with long-range plans.

A new pipe line, 42 kilometers long, between Fier and Vlone is under construction. Study and preparatory work have been started toward the construction of a new factory for metal cans for packing bitumen and mazut. Preliminary study toward drawing up plans for the construction, after the end of the Two-Year Plan, of a petroleum refinery has been started. The existing distilleries and refineries will be equipped with the necessary tools and boilers. All mines will receive funds for expanding their present facilities and opening new mines, and geological and mineralogical research will be undertaken with a view to protecting known and unknown mineral reserves.

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Large sums are earmarked for the improvement of working conditions in the mining industry. Special emphasis is placed upon the petroleum field at Patos, where the construction of a new workers' city has begun. It will contain 200 apartments for workers' families, quarters for 600 single workers, mess halls, baths, a movie, clubs, a library, schools, kindergartens and nursery schools, a hospital, stores, etc.

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